



Forest Carnivore Conservation and Management in the Interior Columbia Basin: Issues and Environmental Correlates

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Abstract

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Forest carnivores in the Pacific Northwest include 11 medium to large-sized mammalian species of canids, felids, mustelids, and ursids. These carnivores have widely differing status in the region, with some harvested in regulated furbearer seasons, some taken for depredations, and some protected because of rarity. Most large carnivores have declined in numbers or range from human encroachment, loss or modification of forest habitat, accidental deaths (e.g., mortality from vehicles), illegal kills, and our inability to adequately monitor and protect populations. Efforts to reverse these trends include new approaches to reduce conflicts with humans, research to better define habitat needs, formation of expert carnivore working groups, and use of Geographic Information System models to predict specific impacts of habitat modifications. Long-term preservation of large carnivores in the region is problematic unless we reduce forest fragmentation and conflicts with humans and improve our ability to quantitatively integrate population dynamics with landscape level habitat requirements.

Keywords: Coyote, gray wolf, bobcat, lynx, mountain lion, fisher, marten, river otter, wolverine, grizzly bear, black bear, conservation, management, carnivores, late successional forest, wilderness, roads, disturbance, fragmentation, conservation biology, geographic information systems, forest management, animal damage.

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